



**Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
*San Antonio Division*  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FBI SAN ANTONIO PRESS OFFICE**  
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*New Fraud Schemes Targeting Families of Unaccompanied Children*

Federal Bureau of Investigation – San Antonio Division, US Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Inspector General, US Department of Homeland Security and US Customs and Border Protection – South Texas Campaign, seek to warn the public about new fraud schemes which attempt to exploit and prey on relatives of the recent influx of unaccompanied children entering the United States. The perpetrators of these schemes have demanded payments from family members, claiming the monetary payments will cover processing and travel expenses needed to allow the children to be reunited with their families.

On July 18, 2014, San Antonio FBI learned of two similar fraud schemes which were carried out using telephone contact to reach their intended victims (the relatives of the unaccompanied children) located throughout the United States. One fraud scheme involved individuals who claimed to be representing a charitable/non-profit organization, which reportedly assisted in processing and reuniting the children with their families. Another potential scheme may have involved individuals who are believed to have spoofed the phone number of a San Antonio business organization in an attempt to lend credibility to their claim.

Individuals participating in these schemes requested payments ranging from approximately \$300 to several thousand dollars. The number of victims and amount of losses is not known at this time.

Anyone who is requested to make payment for fees or expenses related to the processing, travel or reunification of unaccompanied children should view such a request with extreme caution. Anyone with information about the fraud schemes described above should contact their local FBI office.

Fraud schemes described above are not uncommon. In the past, crisis situations and natural disasters have prompted individuals with criminal intent to solicit payments and contributions purportedly for legitimate expenses and charitable organizations and/or good causes.

Therefore, before making a payment or donation of any kind, the public should investigate further, take caution and adhere to certain guidelines, to include the following:

- Be skeptical of individuals representing themselves as officials asking for payments or donations door-to-door, via phone, mail, e-mail or social networking sites.

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- Be skeptical of individuals requesting payment or contributions by courier, wire, or those who request your bank account or credit card number.
- Verify the legitimacy of the government agency or non-profit organization by utilizing various Internet-based resources which may confirm the correct phone number, email, and/or the group's existence and its non-profit status rather than following a purported link to an emailed site.
- Call the official telephone number of the government agency seeking/authorizing collection of the fees/costs to ensure the request for payment is legitimate.
- Do not respond to any unsolicited (spam) incoming e-mails, including clicking links contained within those messages.
- Be cautious of e-mails that claim to show pictures of intended recipients in attached files which may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders.
- Make contributions directly to known organizations rather than relying on others to make the donation on your behalf to ensure contributions are received and used for intended purposes.
- Do not give your personal or financial information to anyone who seeks payment or solicits contributions: Providing such information may compromise your identity and make you vulnerable to identity theft.

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